

What is claimed is:

1. A method of controlling reproduction of software by an end-user of the software, the method comprising:

- providing to an entity that licenses its software to users, license generation software, which when operated generates validation numbers, there being a unique validation number for each copy of the software to be separately licensed;
- a copy of the validation number being provided each of a license registration database and included with the software when supplied from the entity;
- when the user installs a software on a designated system, determining a registration key formed from the unique validation number and additional information from the least one of a number related to the designated system and a user password created by the user;
- in response to the information provided, using the license registration database, generating a license key number; and
- using the license key number on the users system to unlock use of the software.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the registration key includes both the user password and the number related to the designated system.

3. A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the number related to the designated system comprises a number already stored on the hard disk drive in the user system.

4. A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the number related to the designated system comprises a number already stored in a microprocessor in the user system.

5. A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the number related to the designated system comprises a number derived from a network interface card installed in the user system.

6. A method as in claim 1 wherein the unique validation number comprises information identifying the entity, information identifying the product, and

1 7. A method as in claim 1 wherein at the time the user registers  
2 licensing of the software for a particular system, the transaction is carried out on-line, and  
3 software determines the number related to the designated system.

1                    8.        A method as in claim 1 further comprising the step of also  
2        providing the unique validation number to a library containing other such validation  
3        numbers.

1 9. A system as in claim 8 wherein the validation number further  
2 includes a unique number not controlled by the vendor.

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